



FACT SHEET

Scottsdale Drinking Water Standards

Dec. 2010

Q: I saw a story in the media stating our drinking water is not safe to drink? Is this true?

A: No. From time to time various advocacy groups develop more stringent theoretical or desired standards for drinking water than what is established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). These groups then compare their test results to these artificial standards and attempt to draw the public's attention.

In this case, the Environmental Working Group (EWG) published a study on Hexavalent Chromium (also known as Chromium 6) and its presence in drinking water supplies throughout the country. Scottsdale's water was tested by the EWG's standards, not the EPA's standards, and trace amounts of Chromium 6 were detected (their study shows Chromium 6 at 0.05 ppb in the Scottsdale water supply). Currently, the EPA has not set a regulatory limit for Chromium 6, but will most likely be re-evaluating whether or not to regulate Chromium 6 and at what level in the next few years. At this time, drinking water providers are required to test for Total Chromium. Chromium 6 is a component of Total Chromium.

The city of Scottsdale Water Resources Department is committed to providing the highest quality drinking water and the best service to our customers. We perform hundreds of different tests on a regular basis to ensure the water you're drinking meets or surpasses the standards set by EPA. Water Resources staff works closely with the EPA, state and county officials to make certain all drinking water standards are met every time you open a tap at your home or business. Scottsdale will undoubtedly meet any new standards that are implemented by the EPA.

Q: What is Hexavalent Chromium (Chromium 6)?

A: Chromium 6 is a chemical commonly discharged from steel and pulp mills as well as metal-plating and leather-tanning facilities. Scottsdale does not have any of these types of industries in operation. Chromium 6 can also enter water through the natural erosion of soil and rock.

Q: Does Scottsdale test for Total Chromium and Chromium 6?

A: Yes. The city of Scottsdale regularly tests for Total Chromium in the drinking water supply and has recently begun testing for Chromium 6. Testing for Total Chromium has shown that all our water sources are well below the regulatory standard of 100 parts per billion (ppb). In 2010 the highest level of Total Chromium detected was 46.5 ppb.

In anticipation of possible regulations, last year the city began testing our water sources for Chromium 6 and will continue until all sites are tested. Chromium 6 has no regulatory level to compare our results to, but so far we have tested twelve wells and have found detectable levels of Chromium 6 in two.

Q: What does parts per billion (ppb) mean?

A: Parts per billion is a unit of measure used to express the number of parts (e.g. grams) contained within a billion parts of gas (air), liquid (water), or solid (soil). Typically, one part per billion is the equivalent of one drop of water in an Olympic-sized swimming pool.

Q: Are there any regulatory standards in place for Chromium 6?

A: Not at this time. The state of California has proposed a public health goal of 0.06 ppb, but neither California nor U.S. EPA has implemented a maximum allowable level.

Q: How is Scottsdale reducing Chromium 6 in our water supply?

A: Even though Scottsdale's levels for Chromium 6 are well below industry standards, we have the ability to utilize primarily surface water, such as the Colorado, Salt or Verde rivers which do not contain Chromium 6. In almost all locations we also have the ability to blend well water with surface water before distributing to customers.

Scottsdale uses some of the most technical and advanced water treatment processes available to provide you with the best drinking water available.

While the treatment and disinfection processes employed by water providers reduce the levels of impurities found in your drinking water, there are still traces of minerals, etc. in the water you use every day. Rest assured - these levels are below the regulatory standards.

For more information on Scottsdale's water quality, visit <http://www.scottsdaleaz.gov/Water.asp> and click on the 2009 Water Quality Report link.